

## Sharing Your Message: Examples of Community Awareness Activities

Organizations, groups, and tribal communities not yet ready to undertake a year-round family support program like the ones described in the previous section can still do much to help raise awareness, strengthen families, and protect children. The following ideas offer some starting points for planning local community awareness activities. While some of these are specific to Child Abuse Prevention Month, most can be used at any time of year.

**Hold a Blue Ribbon Campaign.** Since 1989, millions of people across the country have participated in Blue Ribbon campaigns by wearing the ribbons and getting involved in community activities to promote safe children and healthy families. Prevent Child Abuse Virginia, a State chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, uses the blue ribbon to celebrate “Blue Ribbon Parents,” “Blue Ribbon Kids,” or “Blue Ribbon Communities” that find new and innovative ways to support families.

**Involve local faith communities.** Tips include organizing a parenting fair to educate parents about support services available in their community, holding a Family Fun Day or Parent’s Night Out, hosting a parent education or self-help group at the facility, and establishing a resource library focusing on parenting issues.

**Involve men and fathers.** The Hillsdale Child Abuse Council in Michigan kicked off its countywide “Real Men Rock” shaken baby public awareness campaign with an ad campaign showing local fathers nurturing and rocking their babies. Participants included a local emergency medical technician and a teacher.

**Involve local schools.** The Exchange Club Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse of the Trident Area, South Carolina, has developed a report card insert to show parents a positive approach to dealing with disappointing grades.

**Honor your community’s culture.** Parenting norms vary from culture to culture—be sure your techniques for supporting families are relevant. The child abuse prevention program for the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe hosted a conference called “Honor Our Children, Honor Our Heritage.” The conference included a spiritual run/walk and a pow-wow (“Honor Our Children, Drum Out Child Abuse”). Speakers from other reservations were invited to talk about child abuse prevention. (For more information on this and other prevention activities for Native American communities, see the listing for the National Indian Child Welfare Association in the resource directory on page 47.)

**Encourage community members to celebrate their own heroes.** The New Hampshire Children’s Trust Fund, New Hampshire’s Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grantee, advertised the opportunity to make a contribution to the trust fund to honor a mother or someone else special to the donor. The message read, “When you make a gift to the New Hampshire Children’s Trust Fund in the name of someone you love, your gift will not only honor her, but also help other women become strong, effective mothers, too.”

**Distribute educational resources for parents.** Find a number of tip sheets on positive parenting (in English and Spanish) in the “What Individuals Can Do” section of this resource packet. Many of the national organizations listed in the resource directory on page 47 also offer parenting resources.

